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- The Song of Ages: Sermons.** By REGINALD J. CAMPBELL. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1905. Pp. 308. \$1.25 net.
- The Inspiration of Our Faith: Sermons.** By JOHN WATSON, D.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1905. Pp. 359. \$1.25 net.
- Bread and Salt from the Word of God.** By THEODOR ZAHN, Th.D. Translated by C. S. BURN AND A. E. BURN. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1905. Pp. 306. \$1.50 net.
- Expositions of Holy Scripture.** Vol. I, The Book of Genesis. By ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1906. Pp. 339.
- The Garden of Nuts.** By W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, LL.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1905. Pp. 232. \$1.25 net.
- The Work of Preaching.** By ARTHUR S. HOYT, D.D. New York: The Macmillian Co., 1905. Pp. 355, \$1.50 net.

The perusal of a few recent books, sermonic and others, has led to the question: To what extent and in what way does the preacher make use of the Bible in his work? In one of these books Dr. Robertson Nicoll makes the statement: "References to the Bible in sermons, so far as we hear and read them, are surprisingly small." Certain it is that the Bible is not now generally employed as it was. One does not find the modern preacher buttressing his arguments with texts of Scripture. But there is very much preaching that is biblical through and through. The Bible is the great storehouse of illustration of our best preachers. It is the religious classic from which they quote freely and constantly. They find the norm of religious experience in the saints of the Old and New Testaments. They have emerged very largely from controversy about the Bible and have learned to value it for its religious power.

An examination of these six recent books may indicate a trend. Three of them are volumes of sermons; two are expositions, the one homiletic, the other devotional; and one is a classroom treatise on preaching.

At the first blush one would not call the minister of the London City Temple a biblical preacher. He is so modern and humanitarian; he is so unconventional as a sermonizer; he is so direct and frank and free. But for these very reasons he can be thoroughly biblical, and he is. As a matter of fact, there are few preachers who devote so much of their sermons to exposition of the text as Mr. Campbell. Often one third, sometimes one-half, of his discourse, is a presentation of the significance of the Scripture passage. "The Song of the Ages" is a sermon from the Apocalypse. Skilfully declining to interpret the visions, but indicating

his belief that the details of the Apocalypse were doubtless better understood in the beginning than they are ever likely to be in the future, he seizes upon the thought of the song of the faithful. He discusses the Song of Moses; he draws illustration from the triumphs of Israel; he refers to the Paschal song; he dwells on the songs of the early martyrs. Then connecting, as his custom is, all history and life with the Bible history and life, he speaks of the song of the faithful on earth in all ages.

Another sermon in this volume is upon the locusts of Joel. He discusses with interest and insight the prophet's method of using passing events for religious effect. Then, with Peter's sermon as a justification, he spiritualizes the locusts.

Mr. Campbell is putting out a number of volumes of sermons. He confesses that he does not offer them as a contribution to sermonic literature. They are not models of style, but they are practical, interesting, familiar, helpful, brotherly. They are in the best sense biblical, and they breathe the spirit of Christ. He has not great variety of style. These seventeen sermons are of the same general type. But it is a type that will attract men and do good. The volume contains a picture of the preacher's fine face as a frontispiece. A judicious young critic said: "Mr. Campbell has the beauty of a woman with the strength of a man." He would be a model for a St. John.

Another preacher who would not be called biblical is Dr. John Watson. He is certainly not an expository preacher. He does not, like Mr. Campbell, build his sermon upon Scripture passage or incident. Yet his text is not a point of departure; it is the thought of the sermon. Biblical suggestion, illustration, quotation abound. "The Inspiration of Our Faith" is a sermon pleading for the recognition of the primacy of emotion in religion as in poetry. It is a presentation of the rich emotional elements of the Bible and of the church. Another sermon, on "The Passion of God," is a noble plea for the biblical anthropopathism in our thinking of God.

These twenty-nine sermons may indeed be called a contribution to sermonic literature. Here is rare spiritual insight, winning appeal, poetic beauty of expression. And always Ian Maclaren preaches Jesus.

A volume of sermons from the German pulpit, well translated into English, is welcome indeed. Dr. Theodor Zahn is professor of theology in the University of Erlangen. His sermons are based on the New Testament pericope, and are expositions generally of considerable portions of Scripture. His method is a discussion of the passage with much insight and skill, the deduction of a theme from the discussion, and then a careful analysis of his theme. These sixteen discourses are not theological.

The great scholarship of the preacher enables him to be simple and familiar. He announces his purpose to give a bit of bread and a pinch of salt from the Word of God. His well-known conservatism is occasionally, though not obtrusively, evident. These sermons represent the strong German pulpit. They would probably be considered rather dry by an American congregation.

Dr. Alexander Maclaren has undertaken a great work. *Expositions of Holy Scripture* will really be a contribution to homiletics rather than to biblical science. The veteran expositor in a series of large volumes will present his thoughts on the significance of the great passages of Scripture. Vol. I, "Genesis," has come from the press. The chapters could almost be preached as they stand. The following may indicate the author's attitude: Gen., chap. 1, speaks not of cosmogony, but of God; "how far the details accord with the order of science we are not careful to ask;" whether or not the story of "the fall" is legend is of less consequence than its moral and religious significance; the fall is a historical fact, for no tribe has ever advanced apart from the gospel; Enoch's translation brought the future life into the realm of fact; the sacrifice of Isaac was not a crime to Abraham, it was the crowning test of faith.

Dr. Maclaren is at his best in the discussion of the incident at Peniel, "the twofold wrestling." It is a deeply spiritual exposition. With the fine reserve of this great preacher, the modern pulpit will be safe in "spiritualizing" the Old Testament.

*The Garden of Nuts* is a startling title. The editor of the *Expositor* adopts the old phrase of the mystics, by which they designated the portion of the Old Testament in which they delighted, as a title for his plea for a deeper interpretation of Scripture. Dr. Nicoll thinks that we have much to learn from the mystics. He admits modern criticism, but insists that there is an interpretation above criticism. He has little patience with "the historical setting" of passages of Scripture. People will not listen to a preacher who must have a map behind him. The great passages of Scripture are timeless. There is no commentary on Scripture but Scripture. "Criticism has changed and will change, but to the mystic the Word of God remains." That the sense intended by a particular writer is of solitary importance the mystic can never believe.

One is not quite sure how much Dr. Nicoll means here. Is it that any beautiful words of Scripture may mean anything that a pious soul feels them to mean, and still be Scripture? Then what a waste of time has been all biblical study! What matter for the discovery of manuscripts, the settlement of the text, the development of an exact exegesis? We are not

concerned to know what Amos or Luke said or meant, so long as there is something nice under their names that may suggest a beautiful thought to us. If Dr. Nicoll means anything like this, he must not attempt to ascribe any authority to Scripture at all.

But if he means simply that a great word of a prophet or apostle far exceeds its primary application, as new conditions give it larger meaning, then most students with any insight must be reckoned among the mystics. If he means that higher criticism must not be aired in the pulpit, and that sermons need not all begin with a discussion of "the circumstances under which these words were spoken," then it is scarcely necessary to write a book in defense of his view. As a matter of fact, when he comes, in the second part of his book, to apply his "mysticism," we have much the same use of Scripture that Mr. Campbell, Dr. Watson, and Dr. MacLaren have given us. "Christ in the First Psalm" is an essay on the ideal man. Of course, the first psalm suggests Jesus. "They Came unto the Iron Gate" is a discussion of Peter's deliverance, yielding the noble truth: Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Dr. Nicoll admits that he follows Phillips Brooks's beautiful exposition of "The Prophecy of the Bruisings." It is in finding the religious value of the miracle stories and the hero-stories that the modern preacher may find his Bible a storehouse of truth.

In including Dr. Hoyt's treatise on *The Work of Preaching* in this discussion, we would not minimize its value as a textbook. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that it is the best modern book for the classroom upon the subject. It is scientific, sensible, suggestive. But the two chapters on "Scripture Authority in Preaching" are particularly interesting.

Dr. Hoyt would have the preacher use the scientific method in the study and presentation of the Bible. He says this method is giving a diviner life to the Bible. He warns against "spiritualizing," and insists that the Scriptures are not a treasury of texts. He calls for a sensible, scholarly, manly treatment of the great literature, which is the vehicle of God's self-revelation. But he still speaks of the Bible in the terms of external authority. He says that we can be sure that we are giving the message of God only as our subject harmonizes with biblical truth. He would have the preacher regard the Scriptures as "the infallible rule of faith and practice."

One could wish that Dr. Hoyt had given a different idea of authority. If the Bible is an infallible rule, then it is a treasury of texts. We are not much in need of infallibilities after all. We need inspiration, stimulus, strength, direction, truth, beauty, life; and our best preachers will still find these in the supreme religious classic—the Bible.

T. G. S.